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ABSTRACT

This paper is one in a series of four describing a boy-oriented program for elementary school children. It describes a "boy-oriented" classroom, playground, and extracurricular activities; a staff-development program; and development of a "boy-oriented" program package for dissemination purposes. It presents an evaluation of the program showing that boys increased their gain scores in academic subject areas continuously over the three-year project and that both boys and girls achieved more than a year's average growth with the boys catching up with the girls. (TJ)

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Planning/Implementation/Evaluation of A Successful "Boy-Oriented" Primary Program for Both Boys and Girls

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Planning/Implementation/Evaluation of a SUCCESSFUL BOY-ORIENTED Primary Program for Both Boys and Girls

Boys traditionally seem to have more difficulty in school. Boys tend to fail more than girls academically. Girls tend to comprise a greater percentage of the "top groups." More boys have reading problems, are considered "discipline problems," and are enrolled in special reading, math and language remediation classes or special education classes. In addition, more boys tend to be referred to the school psychologist or counselor for help. More boys score in Q_1 on reading, math and language standardized tests in the elementary schools. More girls tend to score in Q_4 of those same tests. More girls than boys are classified as "top students." There tend to be more negative comments written in cumulative files about boys than girls; however, there tend to be more positive comments written about girls. These "general knowledge" statements were substantiated by an investigation within the Thermalito Union Elementary School District in an analysis of standardized test results, cumulative files, remedial reading, math and language class enrollments, "discipline problems" identified by teachers, "top students" identified by teachers, enrollments in special education classes, psychological referral records, etc. It was found that boys, on a two-to-one basis, had more difficulties in school. In contrast, the girls, compared to boys,

succeeded more than the boys, also on a two-to-one ratio. These local findings have been substantiated at the state levels also. For example, data from the State of California (1975-1976) testing program indicates that, regardless of categorical aid programs, boys score significantly and substantially lower than the girls through the state (Barnes & Gehringer, 1977, 1978a 1978b, 1978c: Gehringer and Barnes, 1978a, 1978b, 1978c, 1978d). (See Table 1.)

Table 1

California State Data Analysis: 1975-76

Grade/Sex	Reading	Written Expression	Spelling	Math
Grade 2				
Girls	71			
Boys	65			
Grade 3				
Girls	84			
Boys	80			
Grade 6				
Girls	71.6	69.0	61.5	59.7
Boys	67.9	63.1	58.6	60.0

The California State data analysis reflects a national trend. It is not unique of California children or Thermalito students.

In an attempt to attack this educational need, an ESEA Title III (later re-termed IV-C) was written by the Thermalito Union Elementary School District. It was funded for a three year period to develop a "boy-oriented" primary program which would be successful with both boys and girls. The project was named "Equality Education for Everyone," later nicknamed "Project Boy." The main goal of the program was to maintain the high achievement level of girls in reading, math and language and to raise up the achievement levels of boys to equal the girls' achievement level. This was to be achieved through (1) the planning/development of "boy-oriented" classroom, playground and extra-curricular activities; (2) a staff-development program and attitude change of teachers; and (3) development of a "boy-oriented" program package for dissemination purposes; The Project Boy Syllabus Activity Card Program.

There are various aspects in the planning, implementation and the evaluation of any program. The Project Boy Program is no exception. The adoption/adaption of the Project Boy Syllabus Activity Card Program is simple. All that is needed for program duplication in a new location is (1) a desire on the part of the administration and the teachers to install the philosophy and purpose of the program, i.e., to decrease or reduce the degree to which boys trail girls academically

through a "boy-oriented" program of classroom activities and extra-curricular activities; and (2) to have copies of the Project Boy Syllabus Activity Card Program, preferably one copy per classroom. (However, a staff could develop its own "boy-oriented" program of classroom and extra-curricular activities after careful research and field-testing of the locally developed program. Be it a locally developed "boy-oriented" program or the Project Boy Program, the content of this paper applies equally.) (Barnes and Gehringer, 1977)

The Project Boy Program contains 89 Syllabus Activity Cards for teacher use and reference for hundreds of ideas for classroom activities, playground/physical education activities, during and after school field trips, over-night stays and weekend trips. The program has a manual of use, Teachers' Guide to Project Boy Syllabus Activity Card Program. In addition, each kit comes with a packet of insert materials which can be filled/inserted into the appropriate Syllabus Card for future, additional references.

The program incorporates an instructional strategy and/or products which can be installed in parts and/or phases. The program includes more suggested strategies than can be used by any one teacher or school. The school will, of course, install parts and/or phases of the program by either adoption or adaption, depending upon the individual school's specific needs and circumstances; in fact, each classroom teacher has a wide choice and considerable flexibility with respect to parts and phases installed.

The Project Boy Program is designed to be used by the regular classroom teacher, in various types of classrooms, from the most traditional to the most progressive.

One-day in-service is recommended prior to classroom implementation and several days for program monitoring by school personnel or principal are recommended after implementation. No special facilities or curriculum personnel are required for implementation and the program can be easily installed into a new setting.

Particular staffing patterns will facilitate program implementation, i.e., the assistance of both males and females on the teaching, student teaching, paid instructional-aide and volunteer-aide staffs. Male presence on staff is not a requirement for the program's success; however, it is felt that the presence of males has had a positive effect on staff toward accomplishing project thrust. Both female and male teachers achieved success with the program. Sex of teacher was not the determining factor. The attitude of the teacher involved, the awareness and dedication to solving the educational differentiation between the academic success of boys and girls was the difference (Gehringer and Barnes, 1978b).

A director or coordinator of some sort is recommended. The director might be a school principal, curriculum coordinator, head teacher or anyone given a small amount of time (.10 of full time?) to conduct the coordination activities.

The school administrator should participate in the implementation of the program because of staffing and scheduling considerations.

In regards to the "ideal" number of out-of-school activities which are necessary to contribute to the program's success, about five are recommended per class, minimum. Teachers have reported that planning one out-of-school trip per month, with the entire class or with one or more pupils (small group) was easy to accomplish. Many of the field trips recommended could be accomplished during school hours.

The program planning for the adoption/adaption of the program can be involved, detailed and organized, complete with a needs assessment, goals and objectives, solution procedures/activities, evaluation design, monitoring/management system, etc., or it can be quite simple and informal. The program can simply be purchased and given to the classroom teacher for implementation; however, more careful planning, implementation and evaluation are recommended to facilitate program success and effectiveness.

Normed-referenced, standardized tests can be utilized as part of a needs assessment and/or an evaluation of a program. For example, the following questions can be asked:

How many boys scored in Q_1?

What is the mean grade equivalent score of the boys? Of the girls?

Are the boys scoring lower than the girls?

How many boys scored in Q_4? How many girls?

Are the girls scoring higher than the boys?

If your primary population is similar to most populations, your boys are not succeeding as well as your girls. No particular standardized tests in reading, math and/or language are recommended, as there are several well-known ones on the market from which to choose (Gehringer and Barnes, 1978d).

Student attitudes towards peers, self, school, teacher and learning can be assessed directly, with paper-and-pencil test, the NorBar Attitudinal for example, or inferentially/unobtrusively. Many evaluators prefer instruments similar to the NorBar, which was developed by Jack Lutz at Program Development Center, on the California State University campus in Chico, California. The NorBar is administered with the teacher reading the questions to the class. Each pupil indicates how s/he feels about an item by circling (or drawing, depending on the age of the pupils) the face which best expresses his/her feelings. Sometimes this test is referred to as the "Happy Face" test.

Caution should be taken when attempting to predict/influence academic success/failure as measured on standardized tests and correlated with attitudinal test data, regardless of the attitudinal measure involved. This is an area which needs more research, as there is some indication that there is little or no correlation between academic success, as

measured by standardized tests, and change in pupil attitudes, as measured by paper-and-pencil tests.

Another means of assessing attitudes and/or changes in attitudes (of teachers more than students) is the paper-and-pencil instrument, "Pupil Characteristics Profile." Teachers can fill out a check-list on individual pupils. Then following specific criteria, pupils can be classified according to teacher opinion, as (1) "Top Academically," (2) "Discipline Problems," and/or (3) "Lowest Academically." This can be done on a one-time basis for a needs assessment or on a pre-post basis to calculate teacher attitude changes.

Traditionally, if your population is typical of most populations, you will have more boys than girls classified as "Lowest Academically" and "Discipline Problems," In contrast, you will have more girls than boys classified as "Top Students." The Project Boy Program was quite successful in maintaining the high achievement levels of girls while increasing the boys to a comparable level of the girls.

Another measure of pupil attitudes can be excused and unexcused absences data. Unexcused absences can be considered a measure of pupil attitude towards school. Proportionately, boys tend to have more unexcused absences than girls. The Project Boy Program helped to alleviate the unexcused absence problem, which costs districts monies in loss of a. d. a. (average daily attendance) income.

Looking at absences, the following questions can be asked:

How many unexcused absences did the boys have?

How many unexcused absences did the girls have?

Do boys have more unexcused absences than girls?

How many excused absences did the boys have?

How many excused absences did the girls have?

Do boys have more excused absences than girls?

How much money did the district lose in a.d.a. monies?

Are the excused and unexcused absences excessive or too frequent?

The Project Boy Program was quite successful in attacking the absence (both excused and unexcused) problem. The decrease in absences was statistically significant and monetarily pleasing.

All of the aforementioned measures, including standardized tests in reading, math and language, pupil characteristics, unexcused and excused absences and student attitudes, were utilized in the evaluation of Project Boy effectiveness. The achievement levels in reading, math and language of project boys increased significantly (to .05 level of significance), with the boys scoring comparable to the high achievement levels of girls. With Project Boy implementation, not only was the progress of the girls increased, but there was no statistically significant difference (to the.05 level of significance) between the reading, math and language scores of boys and girls.

Project Boy's effectiveness was determined by: (1) a treatment group/comparison group on a grade level basis in reading, math and language; (2) attitudinal changes of target population (as measured by the NorBar Attitudinal test results); (3) a longitudinal study of project pupils in grades 4 and 5 to study the effects of the project in post-project years; (4) excused/unexcused absences comparisons; and (5) pupil characteristics scales comparisons.

There were 187 pupils in the experimental population (grades K through 3) and 150 in the comparison group. Individual pupil progress was followed for the duration of the three-year project; test data was available from October, 1974; May, 1975; October, 1975; May, 1976; October, 1976 and March, 1977.

Project boys (the target population) increased their gain scores in academic subject areas continously over the three year project. These increases continued into the 4th and 5th grades, indicating the "holding power" of achievement gains.

Project boys scored (at a significant level) as well as project girls, who at the start of the project had achieved much better than the boys had. Project Boy has proven itself to be quite effective in raising and maintaining high levels of academic and affective achievement of BOTH boys and girls. Both the boys and girls were achieving more than a year's average growth.

Year's Growth: Boys and Girls

Subject Area	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77
Reading	+0.5	+0.9	+1.4
Language	+0.7	+1.1	+1.6
Math	+0.6	+1.0	+1.8

The Project Boy Program addresses itself to the special needs of boys while meeting the needs of girls, too. This type of program has proven statistically successful with Thermalito pupils, both boys and girls. Other teachers, schools and/or districts are encouraged to develop their own "boy-oriented" programs. Needless to say, boys can achieve at a high level, comparable to the high achievement level of girls.

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